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# THE UNFOLDING PURPOSE

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## LECTURE IV

# THE UNFOLDING PURPOSE

**Introduction :**

History as the recorded course of human life has been the subject-matter of study and reflection since the very dawn of human thought. While there has been a steady and progressive reconstruction of the story of man on this planet, a parallel attempt at the interpretation of the total import of the story has also engaged the inquiring spirit of man all along the course of ages, particularly in periods of reflection on the fundamentals of life.

Broadly speaking four types of thinkers have tackled the phenomenon of history. The historians themselves, occupied for the most part in tracing the passage of events in the lives of peoples, have allowed themselves to articulate the message of the patterns of happenings they have patiently reconstructed. The greatest historians, like Arnold Toynbee in our own times, have invariably drawn generalisations about the human situation and destiny as the distilled essence of their discoveries. The philosophic thinkers seeking to formulate a synoptic conception of existence have brought their spirit of synthesis to the task of interpreting human life in its historical setting. Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece and Hegel and Croce in Modern times are all philosophers of history in this sense. Their reflections on history are integral parts of their speculative visions of ultimate Reality. There is a third category of interpreters of history. Prophets and theologians convinced of a certain basic revelation concerning God and man, have attempted like St. Augustine to see in the pattern of human life in the course of ages a progressive fulfilment of a Divine plan. The religious interpretation of history has been consistently

teleological. Lastly there have been, in recent times, keen and scientific students of social phenomena and cultural dynamics, like Sorokin, who have discerned in the historical processes of human life, the embodiment of certain basic laws and regular tendencies exhibiting the rational character of social phenomena. This fourfold body of interpretation has placed at our disposal a considerable volume of thought that renders any simple approach to the interpretation of the Significance of history both naive and superficial.

But it is possible to re-traverse the field of history by focussing attention on the fundamental problems and seeking their solution from a standpoint of philosophic thought not represented by the body of interpretation set forth so far. After clarifying the basic issues I intend to attempt their solution or an approach to their solution from the philosophical point of view of Indian thought, represented by the Gita, the most representative of our philosophical classics. Such a fresh approach, I am presuming, may yield some insight into the meaning of history, which forms the main subject-matter of this course of lectures.

The Central problems of the philosophy of History may be reduced to three questions. A glance at the existing interpretations will show these questions are not arbitrarily selected but do form the theme of all these interpretations.

(1) Are there any definite laws governing the historical life of mankind?

(2) Is there any definite direction, predetermined and irresistible in which mankind has been moving in the course of its career on earth?

(3) Does the course of human life as recorded in the authentic version we have, reveal or disclose a purpose or plan, fulfilling itself in the course of ages? If so, what is that purpose?

**The role of freedom :**

While admitting the reign of law in human affairs, which is the basic presupposition of all the social Sciences, it is necessary to conceive of these laws in a way that is appropriate to human life. We will miss the essence of the very phenomenon of life if we regard them exclusively in environmental terms. Nor do we conceive them aright if the laws are understood in an utterly mechanistic fashion. Enough scope must be provided for the fact of variation: and the vital role of human striving, whether earth-bound or idealistic. The

causal role of man, as the moving force, must be freely used as a principle of explanation and then only fidelity to historical facts can be attained. We cannot have the story of man retold omitting man himself. The very concept of challenge or the impact of situation would be unintelligible without reference to the other term in the relation, namely, human nature with all its needs, powers, and aspirations.

There have been schools of thought which have predicted inevitable decline and collapse as the final point of history. There have been view? holding the opposite position exulting in the prospects of an eventual and irresistible progress of the human species. Frustrated expectation and failure of prediction have given rise to a cyclical view of history maintaining periodic advance and deterioration as the eternally recurring pattern of history. All these currents of speculation commit the same old error of ignoring the creative power of human nature. No fall does simply happen without being caused by man's folly and no progress takes place without heroic effort and sacrifice on man's part. If human societies move in a perpetual circle, it is precisely because the agents are not moving out of the vicious circle. There is no fatality or providence simply using up the human material. The agents have to wake up from their routine circle and they can. The mechanistic determinism that underlies such views of inevitability of direction are not true of even physical nature and the reading of human nature in purely physical terms would conflict with the intellectual creativeness necessary for the very apprehension of law in nature. Man, as has been said many times, is no 'object' of history but its 'subject'.

Is there a revelation of an antecedent cosmic plan executing itself through the historical life of man? This seems to be a fundamental question requiring consideration. The question proceeds from the theistic standpoint however arrived it. It does not arise independent of that hypothesis and Theism must logically give rise to it in its attempt to subsume the panorama of history under its metaphysical scheme. The answer to the question must be furnished by an empirical survey of history. But to assume that God, the Supreme Reality of Theism, designs creation or the cosmos for a divine end is one thing but to press the implications of purpose in relation to Divine nature and to affirm the automatic and progressive translation of that purpose in the medium of history is another. In other words the purposiveness of God must be so conceived that it involves no deficiency associated with finite teleology and the realization of the purpose in the plane of human life must be construed in such a way that the spiritual initiative and creative responsibility of the finite participants in the arena of history are not swept away by the concrete realization of the Divine purpose. God must not be finitized and the finite spirit

whose perfection He plans through the historical process must not be reduced to the status of an inert tool in the process. The Infinite abundance of God and the creative spontaneity of the finite individual must be duly preserved in the Theistic interpretation of history. To postulate a purpose whose realization is merely a matter of the passage of history is to relegate the earlier phases of history into an instrumental and preparatory status and to look for fulfilment and achievement in the prolongation and the farther end of the process of history. Such a view would place the value of the historical experience of mankind in the remote and indefinite future and rob the intervening periods of all intrinsic worth. It is necessary to render the perfection realizable in history realizable all-through its phases and rescue every one of its phases from lack of intrinsic worth. Each epoch, nay each moment, must contain possibilities of immediate fulfilment as well of necessary contribution to future fulfilment.

While it is legitimate to recognize that the extended perspective of later ages may confer an advantage on those who live then, the earlier ages must also contain possibilities of reaching the summit at least on the part of its choicest spirits. Logicians no longer believe in the finality of enumeration and hence the latest age or civilization is not automatically higher from the qualitative point of view. To speak in religious language "eternity" must be real for every "here and now". Hence there is every necessity to alter our fundamental question concerning the "one increasing purpose in history" even from the standpoint of Theism.

What then are we to make out as the central purpose and significance of history? There is an old Theistic tradition, reaffirmed by Lotze, that the proper mode of viewing creation is to see it as the creation of creative centres of life and consciousness, the self-developing individual spirits, deploying themselves in the free enterprise of self-formation, finding their way to the fulfilment of themselves through trials and tribulations, through hazards and hardships necessarily incidental to the exercise of creative individuality. The central self-imparting life of the supreme spirit generates and sustains conditions necessary for the creative evolution of individuality on the part of the finite, so that it may grow into the full stature of self-hood and partake of the perfection of life in God. The purpose of history may be described in this setting as the discovery of the right purpose on the part of the finite participants in history. Divine Teleology in this sense loses its external character and acquires organic immanence in the world-process. As the purpose of the central reality is regarded as self-imparting, the limitations of finite teleology conceived as the attainment of previously unattained values are not imported into it and as the search for purpose on the part of creatures is recognized as fundamental, the negation of their spiritual

freedom is wholly avoided. There is neither the finitizing of God nor the mechanizing of man.

Thus, whether we examine the nature of the laws of history or the notion of direction in the story of man or the Theistic idea of a divine purpose working itself out in history, we are brought to the Central conclusion that history is the field or the medium in and through which the creative self-realization of man has to be worked out.

**Freedom and the conflict of values:**

History presents a continuous stream of events that call for the determination of purpose on the part of the subject of history. This is an empirical generalization borne out by an extensive consideration of data and is also asserted by some of the leading theoreticians on the meaning of the story of man. Nietzsche marked two tendencies as struggling for domination in the history of culture, the Dionysiac and Appollonian. Pareto postulates a distinction between the creative and conservative tendencies as marking societies, elites and epochs in the history of man. Bergson distinguishes between the closed and open ethico-religious orders. Sorokin finds three alternative trends, the Sensate, Ideational and Idealistic as determining social and cultural dynamics. It is such a conflict of ideals that compels consideration of ultimate values. Sometimes the conflict may not be apparent, sometimes one tendency may appear finally triumphant. But in reality the history of man is a perpetual Kurukshetra, an arena of contradiction demanding of man choice and decision. The contradiction is no disaster but an opportunity for a trans-valuation of values, for fundamental rethinking on the goal meriting devotion and dedication. This fact of conflict is there in individual life and in the life of organized societies. The creative formulation of purpose is necessitated by the continuing presentation of a basic dualism of incompatible values, conflicting patterns of ideals, claiming adoption and realization on the part of man. Ancient world views, Zoroastrian, Greek, Hebraic, Chinese and Indian have all discerned this recurrent phenomenon of moral and spiritual warfare in history and have exhorted man to make the right choice. If the central function of history is the provision of the field for man's discovery of purpose, it discharges that function specifically by generating and maintaining a perpetual situation of crisis and conflict. Tension of goals stimulates reflection and reflection directs choice. It is in this background of thought that the Gita enters into our study of history. That some kind of conflict is the main-spring of the historical process is a familiar thought in the philosophy of history. Hegel formulated the idea in a way special to his philosophy. He did well to assert that the development of freedom is the goal of history. But he pictured the history of mankind as a linear process

and saw the realization of the goal of history in the German state of his age and the completion of the self-manifestation of the Divine principle in the Hegelian philosophy. No wonder the Hegelian philosophy of History like the Hegelian philosophy of Nature is one of the curiosities of European thought. Hegelianism shared the general uncritical optimism of the age and predicted the inevitable emergence of the ideal synthesis, failing thereby to provide for the freedom and initiative of individuals and peoples. Hegel spoke of the 'craftiness' of world — Reason over-ruling the purposes of man. The Hegelian version of the historical progress denied intrinsic worth to ages antecedent to the latest and thus many a great civilization, great age and great personality were assigned the undignified role of preparing for the emergence of the Hegelian age, the Hegelian Germany and the Hegelian philosophy. Such an ego-centric predicament has rendered Hegelianism more unpopular than it need be. Marxian version of the role of contradiction in the historical march of humanity and the Marxian presentation of the Dialectic of history is but a special variation of a certain world-view, which is one of the standing systems of beliefs and ideals ever confronting man and inviting its adoption: and it may be broadly named the Materialistic standpoint. It is one of the alternatives in the perennial dilemma before man and it is in that perspective that Marxism like Freudianism comes into the field of philosophical consideration. Hence no further comment at this stage is called for.

**Gita and the two systems of value:**

Let us return to our central affirmation that a conflict is inherent in the history of man and that it enforces the obligation of decision and choice in the matter of ultimate purpose. The Gita offers the characterization of the two alternative types of life as the antagonistic principles, tendencies and equipments permeating the whole of creation. They are appropriately designated Daivi and Asuri, Divine an demonic. The other classification of tendencies Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic is assimilated into this two-fold scheme as Rajas and Tamas are the joint characteristics of the demonic temperament.

Sorokin's sensate spirit corresponds to the Asuric tendency and the idealistic corresponds to the Daivi spirit while the ideational is a moment or partial phase of it when it is not an aberration or arrested manifestation of it. The description of the trends is given once for all in the Gita and in vividness and profundity it is a matchless piece of philosophical poetry.

We may dwell a little on the leading features of the two systems of value that present themselves for man's choice in his individual career and corporate life at every live moment of history. They may

be fully defined or vaguely outlined depending upon the exercise of reflection but they are always operative as demands pressing for adoption. This warfare of ideals places human consciousness in perpetual crisis sometimes open and sometimes concealed, sometimes one system scoring dominance and sometimes another. But the axiological tension is abiding and it fosters the awareness of the necessity for self-determination through a free choice of loyalties. The elements of the Asuric mode of life, the demonic propensity are three and they involve both a theoretical and a practical aspect. In the first place the conception of man, the individual subject, is severely empirical and positive. His physical and biological constituents are the only ones to be noted and his mental aspect is subsumed under the functions of the organism. No further factor transcending the material aspect of personality is accorded recognition. In the second place the universe is affirmed as a self-subsistent system not rooted in a superphysical spiritual principle. There is thus a two-fold denial, that of the spiritual principle in man and the spiritual principle in the cosmos. The outward and physical interpretation of the individual and the Universe is affirmed to be self-sufficient and self-explanatory. In the practical sphere, the consequences of this theoretical conviction are drawn, and the only values admitted are those which are demanded by the animal nature of man. The Gita sums up the practical tendencies that flow from this view of the self and the world in the three propensities of Kama, Krodha and Lobha, body-centred desires, the pugnasitv born of feared or actual opposition to such desires and acquisitiveness for providing for the future satisfaction of such desires. These are declared as the cardinal Vices and the gates of Hell. They are the diseases which the moral formula of the three virtues Dama, Daya and Dana taught by Prajapati in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is meant to extirpate. The gratification of the physical man is the goal and aggressive violence and greedy accumulation of material goods, necessary for procuring that satisfaction follow in consequence. The view is drastic in its negations and leaves no scope for either non-material realities or non-material Ideals. It is a philosophy cut down to the dimensions of the earth-bound experiences of life.

The other mode of thought and life is set forth in the whole of the Gita and in fact the treatise arose to body forth the Daivi point of view. Its first cardinal principle is a radically different concept of man. According to it man is essentially spiritual, transcending the physical system and using the physical contingently as a subordinate factor. Its view of the totality of existence is also fundamentally different. The foundational Reality is God, the supreme spirit, manifesting itself through the manifold universe. What the Naturalist holds as the sumtotal of reality is but an aspect, a superficial expression of the transcendent supreme, according to this conception. This is the second cardinal Principle of the view. Consistently with this two-fold

metaphysical affirmation, the supreme ideal formulated for man's realization is conceived to lie in the union or integration of the spirit in man with the Infinite spirit. Endeavour in this direction must be total and all the resources of finite personality must be moblized in this task of achieving one-ness with God. Such in broad outline is the characterization of the Divine philosophy of life. The distinctive characteristic of the view lies in the vastness of the scope of its affirmation both in its theoretical and practical spheres. Man is Spirit and his perfection lies in attaining God, who is the ultimate Reality.

The two sharply contrasted standpoints confront human consciousness and thus the obligation arises for an examination of these final issues of life. The formation of life's purpose is determined by the results of such an investigation.

**The Idea of Soul:**

The valuational dilemma or the conflict of purposes is to be resolved through a philosophical consideration of the reality in man. Purpose is that whose fulfilment is sought for the satisfaction of the subject by the subject himself and what could give him satisfaction, real, abiding and complete depends upon what he is in reality. Hence the Gita adds to the axiology of the two systems, a conflict in the conceptions of the agent. For the present it is necessary to focus inquiry on the nature of the agent, the self, whose peace and joy are sought through the realization of ends, however conceived.

The Gita presents us at the outset with its theory of the self. The idea of the soul is one of the persistent ideas in man's adventure of Ideas. Whether it is a wish — fulfilling superstition or an irrefutable truth is a basic poblem of metaphysics. The Gita considers it in two of its important chapters, the second and the thirteenth. We will do well to review the philosophical grounds of a decisive character supporting the doctrine of the soul.

That the self is metaphysically distinct from the physical universe inclusive of that part of it which is called the body, must be considered logically from two points of view. They are the psychophysical and the epistemological points of view.

(a) Materialism, in all its variations throughout the centuries, has held that the soul or the self, the conscious principle in man is a product or an attribute of the physical organism. This special product or attribute is said to arise or emerge under a particularly special organization of factors, which, in themselves are devoid of consciousness. Matter generates spirit under rare but natural conditions of itself. When the special organization ceases, the special product or attribute ceases. There is an end of the entity popularly called the

soul.. This is a simple creed and makes for economy in the matter of ultimate explanatory principles.

This view was there in Indian thought from times immemorial and the Charvaka system was only a technical formulation of the everpresent current of materialist thought. The causal presupposition of the argument needs examination. Matter is supposed to produce spirit. The supposition implies the admission of causation as metaphysically sound and the version of causation according to which matter or physical reality can generate out of itself consciousness that differs from it fundamentally.

The conception of reality as purely physical in its inner constitution is derived from an exclusive reliance on the deliverance of sense-experience and a denial of other ways of knowing. Speculative reason, revelation and intuition are set aside and the Charvaka system sets the logical model, as it were, for all materialistic systems. But the experience invested with such absolute authority fails us in our search for the basis of the notion of causation. Materialism in its theory of the self invokes the principle of causality and its Empiricist epistemology fails to offer substantiation of that principle. This is the moral of Hume's Scepticism.

The only irrefutable analogue we have of causation is the consciousness of volition and interpretation of causation in terms of that analogy renders it inconsistent with materialism. The primacy of mind or spirit stands out vindicated if the activity — theory of causation were to be admitted.

In fact, the very concept of matter as an objective reality implies the rejection of pure Empiricism and when once empiricism is discarded, there is no logical ground for rejecting entities not open to sense — perception, logical coherence and not verifiability would then become the criterion of truth and the prima facie case for materialism would break down.

The special version of causation necessary for upholding Materialism consists in affirmating what is non-mental or non-spiritual is capable of giving rise to consciousness in certain highly complex and specialized conditions of organization. The 'promise and potency' of mind must be there in matter, for such an effect to arise out of it. In others words matter must be mind in the making and not wholly material. The matter out of which Spirit could emerge should be more than mere matter. The total nature of the cause must be understood in the light of its effects. As Pringle pattison put it in words that carry permanent validity "We must read back the nature of the latest consequent into the remotest antecedent" (Man's place in the Cosmos' pp. 11-12).

Causation is a kind of revelation, bringing out in temporal sequence, the entirety of the cause. There is Martineaw's sharper observation to the same effect. "Such extremly clever matter-matter that is upto everything, even to writing Hamlet, and finding out its own evolution, may be fairly regarded as a little too modest in its disclaimer of the attributes of Mind." (Quoted by Daws Hicks in his "philosophical bases of Theism." p. 202).

G. F. Stout in his famous refutation of Materialism goes to the root of the matter. 'The radical disparity of nature between matter and mind is a bar to the transformation of either into the other.... When anything changes, it does so always in **some respect.** The change affects some general aspect of its nature, and its successive phases consist in specific and particular variations of this generic character....... The vital point is that there is no generic character common to what is mental and what is not mental such that the difference between them can be conceived as a difference between specific modes of this common character. They are separated in their nature by the whole diameter of being." (Mind and Matter), (pp. 133-134).

Materialism is thus seen as Shankara declares, to get itself refuted by merely subjecting it to doubt.'

संशयमात्रेणापि परपक्षः प्रतिषिध्यते ।

(B.S.B. 3-3-54).

It collapses on mere inquiry into its grounds.

(b) The epistemological argument against materialism and in favour of the reality of the Self as transcending matter is even more decisive. All inquiry takes for granted and cannot but take for granted the reality of the cognitive situation. The desire for knowledge is itself an expression and forms part of the situation. This is the cardinal point in the Cartesian argument. The situation consists of the knowing subject, the seeker of knowledge, its operation of acquiring knowledge and the object towards which the operation is directed. The subject is self-established in the sense that its awareness of itself is independent of and is the prius of its knowledge of objects. Knowledge of objects is the process of bringing them into a special relation with it and it is that relation which renders them known. In other words the self is self-conscious and it is this self-consciousness that furnishes the foundation for object-consciousness whose completion constitutes the knowledge of the object. The fact of self-consciousness at once marks off the self from everything else. It is a mode of consciousness in which the subject and object are one and hence it gives rise to self-affirmation while the non-self is differentiated from the subject as an object and is affirmed by the subject as such. Self-affrmation is a unique characteristic of the self.

Another characteristic of the self is its unity. The process of knowing involves synthesis or unification. This unification is necessary for both identification and discrimination, for comparison as well as contrast. Within the unitary field of awareness, consciousness unifies its impressions and it is thus that the impressions are invested with objective reference. Consolidation of the varied sensory material into a unified focus lifts experience from the subjective sphere into the realm of objectivity and transforms the psychic stream of mental events into knowledge of objective reality. Unification of experience issues in knowledge, in judgments involving affirmation transcending mere subjectivity. This is the fundamental truth in the critical philosophy of Kant.

Now this unity fundamental to knowledge means a great deal with regard to the subject of knowledge. It is an integral entity. It is wholly unlike the material world, subject to composition and disintegration, whose unity at its best is unity of composition: the very comprehension of it as such a unity presupposes a subject having a more fundamental type of unity.

The subject of knowledge has another basic characteristic. It should be of an abiding nature. It must at least contain an element that persists unchanged in the course of successive experiences. Otherwise even the experience of change would be impossible, for recognition of change as change requires an unchanging experiencer of changes. This feature also distinguishes the subject of knowledge from the inherently temporal material phenomena.

In the light of these characteristics of the self as revealed in the situation of knowledge, its self-affirmation, integral unity and unbroken continuity of being, we are in a position to claim that the demonstration of the self's distinction from the passing manifold of unconscious existence is conclusive.

Whatever the dust of controversy through the ages concerning the doctrine of the soul, it is difficult to see how these characteristics can be denied. Self-awareness is the presupposition and foundation of all awareness. The simplest act of cognition involves a synthesis and that an active synthesis by which the knowing subject orders its manifold presentations and thus attains objectivity of apprehension. The consciousness of temporal succession cannot itself be a temporal succession. These are principles that disclose themselves when the fact of knowledge is subjected to critical inquiry.

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Kant argued that the epistemological implications of knowledge should not be construed as metaphysical discoveries of the nature of the self. But in knowledge lies the whole being of the knower and

what knowledge reveals about the knower ought to be taken as really characteristic of the knowing principle. The nature of knowledge is revelatory of the nature of the self, as the subject of knowledge. The self abstracted from its characteristic expression, its self-exercise through the activity of knowing, is no reality and Kant may repudiate metaphysical construction of its nature. But the self in its concreteness, in its vital being as the active centre of experience and knowledge, ought to be interpreted on the basis of the data furnished by the fact of knowledge. Metaphysical nullification of the epistemological findings about the subject of knowing would be a methodological blunder. It is for this reason that idealists like T. H. Green made the necessary advance from the position of Kant.

Whether we adopt a predominantly psycho-physical approach or the method of pursuing truth about the self through the implications of knowledge, the distinctness or transcendence of the self in relation to the realm of the physical, stands out as an assured principle, whose certainty grows as we subject it to more examination.

With this irreducible core of the doctrine of the soul, we may resume the consideration of ultimate value or purpose.

**The nature of purpose :**

With the definition of the nature of the self and an assurance of its reality the ground for the formulation of purpose is cleared. The nature of the self, it was contended, determines the purpose or object in the realization of which it reaches satisfaction. If the self is not the same as the physical organism, but an entity transcending it and possessed of self-consciousness and integral and non-temporal unity of being, the nature of the ideal end to be sought must be accordingly determined. It can no longer lie in the animal gratification through appropriation of physical and sensory objects and situations. The pursuit and even the acquisition of such goods is sure to leave the soul thwarted and unsatisfied, for the ends presented for its satisfaction are not the ones in which its fundamental nature allows it to find fulfilment. The fulfilment sought must be in conformity with and in furtherance of the inherent demands of its nature. Self-knowledge is the bed-rock, as it were, of genuine self-realization and the character of the agent determines the direction in which well-being and progress will be found for the agent.

While the demands of the body are for gratification through appropriation of external resources, the demands of the self, as a spiritual principle, are of a different kind. Spirit finds peace and joy in the exercise of its characteristic spiritual powers and resources. It is a joy through self-exercise, through fulfilment of function, that consti-

tutes satisfaction for the self as spirit and not the having or gathering up of external things. What constitutes the natural capacity of the self must be given adequate opportunity for development, for the self to enjoy the delight of its existence. Self-development through fullness of evolution of natural capacity is the highest value, the supreme object of endeavour.

Now the natural capacity or excellence of the self must be precisely discerned for a further definition of value. Both Greek thought at its best as represented by Plato and Aristotle and Indian thought as represented in the tradition of Vedanta, have identified the capacity for knowledge, consciousness as exercised in knowing, as the fundamental power and excellence of the self. There is justification for such a position, for it is the fact and process of the cognitive activity that furnishes the authentic revelation of the self's reality and nature. The affective and conative aspects of personality are particular phases of the knowing process. The logic of this assimilation of other psychical functions to the cognitive activity will become clear in the sequel. At this stage it is enough to remark that the being of the self, as distinguished from the non-self, lies fundamentally in its power of apprehension. The goal of this tendency or capacity consists in the apprehension of reality. It is a power setting up in the self an irresistable Nisus towards truth, towards the understanding of the real. The goal of human thought is the discovery of the real, and in the achievement of that goal lies the supreme realization of the natural power of the self. Truth is therefore the supreme purpose. The search for reality is the search for value. In view of the basic nature of the self, the quest for perfection is quest for reality.

**Nature of Truth :**

Elaboration of this identification of ultimate human purpose as the aspiration for the comprehension of reality must be attempted and its essential implications must be worked out.

As the clarification of the proper purpose of human life required the determination of the inner nature of man, the definition of that purpose as the knowledge of the real requires us to move forward to a fuller articulation of the notion of reality. The real is that which constitutes the object of true apprehension. The nature of truth consists of the understanding of reality, of apprehension being at one with the objective factor.

The truthfulness of human thought is its natural and inherent characteristic. Only when it is vitiated by external and contingent conditions it fails in its proper function of authentic discovery. This, according to Bosanquet, is the central assumption of the ontological

argument. The Indian doctrine of Swatah-pramanya is a defence of this point of view. When thought functions according to the inherent law of its nature unimpeded by alien and thwarting circumstances it achieves its objective of apprehending reality. When it is thwarted in its natural direction and falls short of being true to itself, it misses truth and deviates into error. The test and criterion of such deviation is contradiction. What fails this way is not simply abolished. The content of error contains a positive element, some commission by way of affirmation about reality and some negative element overlooking or denying of it some features it actually has. When the claim of error to truth stands rejected by the exposure of contradiction, what happens to this two-fold content is to be analysed. The positive factor is the expression of the natural urge of thought to characterize reality truthfully and must be incorporated in a truer version and perspective The negation or omission is what has occurred owing to the limitation of thought effected by the thwarting adjuncts. Hence the detection and rejection of error as a consequence of contradiction must result in a fuller apprehension correcting error by including the positive content of error in itself and negating the negation characteristic of error. Hence error is error owing to the negation it contains and truth is the amplification and enlargement of the affirmation initiated in error.

That the negation contained in error is cancelled in the correcting judgment occasions no particular controversy. Error to be error must deny some truth and in its elimination this denial also must be eliminated. The positive element involved in it, the affirmative characterization of the real should be closely scrutinized. Is it also to be negated in the correcting judgment or is it to be taken up and comprehended in it? The first represents the commonsense alternative. It would imply that the impediments to the natural functioning of thought could impart to it a driving force and make it commit itself to a wholly false affirmative characterization of the real. To admit this possibility would amount to admitting the possible nullification of the natural drive and active nisus of thought towards reality and its replacement by a wholly different direction of activity. When such a radical degradation of thought is held possible, there is no limit beyond which scepticism cannot be pressed. Thought ceases to be itself when conditioned by impediments and is changed into a 'private factory of unrealities'. On such a supposition, as the whole of thought is liable to such a two-fold degradation in its positive as well as negative aspects, there is no certainty, no truth in any thought short of the absolute and final insight into reality. Such is the standard criticism of the coherence-theory of truth. There would be no such thing as a finite being attaining the vision of reality. Moreover, what we claim as absolute and final truth may also be another finite version, doubly

degraded and universal denial of human truth would be the legitimate conclusion of such a position. If, on the contrary, thought is conceived as a developing process, ever correcting itself through progressive cancellation of earlier negations and assimilation of the earlier affirmations in broadening perspectives, scepticism is avoided and the dynamic and growing character of the intellectual process is maintained. Error errs in its negotiations and truth takes up and completes the positive element in error. Thought evolves, as Spinoza maintained, from error, which is partial truth, to fuller truth.

Thought is a self-completing characterization of reality continually overcoming gaps, omissions and negations and expanding the positive content. Contradiction and the need to resolve it administer vital pressure on thought to keep it going on its self-increasing march. From this standpoint absolute truth is a non-contradictory and systematically ordered characterization of reality with all negation and inadequacies transcended.

**Idea of Reality:**

In the light of this enunciation, brief and not substantiated dialectically for want of space, we have to approach the consequent idea of reality. Reality is the subject of the all-comprehending affirmation of thought, transcending negation constitutive of error. As fulfilling this nature of thought it must be an all-inclusive and unitary principle, for exclusion as well as unmitigated plurality carry the implication of negation. The nature of error lies precisely in the exclusive affirmation of a fragment of reality and thorough-going pluralism implies the non-being of the rest of existence in each of the plurality of entities posited. The wholly non-negative must be both all-encompassing and integral, according scope within itself for all affirmations and that without internal diremption of being. The unity inclusive of all must be so conceived that the unity and the included plurality are not set against each other. The 'one' must affirm itself in the 'many' and the 'many' in its turn must affirm itself in the 'one'. Such an organic and concrete unity comprehending infinite diversity and unbroken oneness of substantive essence is the only type of unity that meets the logical requirements of the situation. The 'one' is a positive category, not the negation of the 'many'. It must be something in itself to be the substratum of the 'many' even if the latter is illusory. All the greater is the logical implication of its positive character if the plurality is real and the 'one' is its sustaining ground. The 'many' in its turn consists of a plurality of entities, whose reciprocal differentiation is rooted in their unique and irreplaceable positive natures, in the absence of which the differentiation could not arise at all. The individuality of an individual unit of existence is an addition to the sum of being and hence positive. The non-existence of any of the 'many' would involve the diminution to that extent of the

totality of being. Thus neither unity nor plurality nor their belonging together are negative in significance. Hence the concept of reality must conserve the positive imports of both unity and diversity and negate their mutual negation assumed in the popular views of unity and plurality. The two positives positively indwelling in each other constitute the ultimate nature of reality.

A further determination of this absolute principle, a more concrete characterization of its identity, is called for. It is infinite and one, appropriating to itself richness of cosmic diversity in an organic way. Further inquiry must examine whether we can regard it as physical, as something identifiable with the non-mental or non-spiritual in character. Can we ascribe to the central principle the nature of a non-self, lacking the character of consciousness?

In other words, does materialistic or naturalistic Monism bring out the nature of the metaphysical ultimate? The answer to this question has been forestalled considerably by the argument concerning the reality of the self. The self, the knowing subject, is not a derivative of matter, however dynamically the latter may be conceived, as long as consciousness is denied of its inherent constitution. The non-self can be only a part or aspect of the total reality and never the all-encompassing principle. Negation of consciousness enters into the very definition of matter, if Materialism is honest with itself and offers itself as a specific philosophic standpoint. Otherwise, it slides into a vague and amorphous pan-vitalism or pan-psychism. According to the foregoing account of reality, negation of anything so positive as consciousness cannot but be error.

This difficulty can be overcome if reality is lookekd upon as self or spirit, whose differential essence is unmistakably positive. Consciousness belongs to the realm of being and not non-being and as such the infinite principle must be the centre of consciousness, a substance of the nature of a self-affirming subject. While so much is certain and follows by implication the definition of the real we have come to, further clarification is called for.

Can the ultimate subject be of the nature of a finite individual self, such as we, positive no doubt in essence but with unrealised potentialities, lacking in and in perpetual pursuit of perfection? To frame the question clearly is already to get at the answer. The individual self, characterized by self-consciousness, is in pursuit of perfection and is out to define for itself and to realize its ultimate purpose. It is not all it is capable of being. The fact of evil reveals its deficiencies in the matter of fullness of being.

But in and through the experience of evil and imperfection, there is continuous self-experience in the form of self-consciousness. We

have seen that ultimate reality is that in the apprehension of which there is fullness of being and perfection for the subject. If the self were the final principle, consciousness of it would involve the achievement of perfection. But self-consciousness as we have it is itself the background and presupposition of the experience of failure as well as blessedness. It is not merely compatible with imperfection but is the prius of the experience of it, for it is with reference to the self that perfection or imperfection is experienced. The quality of consciousness in terms of perfection furnishes a decisive indication of the ontological status of its object. That whose presence or revelation in consciousness does not preclude imperfection in the subject is not the ultimate principle. The test of metaphysical ultimacy is the enjoyment of self-fulfilment characterizing the apprehension of the principle in question. In the words of the Upanishads, Brahman is Ananda and whatever falls short of the axiological test is not the metaphysical ultimate. But self-consciousness though a necessary presupposition of one's experiences of every type, is not the completion and consummation of the life of the subject of experience. It may be contended that self-consciousness is not self-knowledge and when self-knowledge is attained perfection is attained. The objection to that position is obvious. Self-knowledge is the determinant of the purpose that the self should pursue and the proper line of advance towards its realization. It is not itself the goal but the starting point of the pilgrimage towards it. Hence neither self-consciousness nor self-knowledge carries the fullness of actuality for the subject, which fullness is the decisive characteristic of the experience and apprehension of ultimate reality.

It may also be contended that the self in its real and non-phenomenal character is perfect in eternal actuality and that the experience of evil and imperfection is illusory deriving from a misinterpretation of its nature. Self-knowledge may be maintained to be simply the recovery of this perfection by way of experience. But illusion and misconstruction are themselves forms of imperfection and to posit them of the self is to admit that it is an imperfect principle in need of and marching towards perfection. Even if a specific error is corrected, the liability to such errors remains a characteistic of the self, rendering it finite. After all, deficiency in knowledge is the fundamental deficiency in the self, whose essential being lies in the capacity for comprehension. If the failure in knowledge can befall the self, its perfection can only be a potentiality to be realized through spiritual growth. How can the knowledge of the self-in-itself carrying just this potentiality and not excluding the possibility of lapse and failure be itself the achievement of fullness of life? On the contrary it arouses discontent and intensifies the quest for perfection. Self-knowledge defines values and cannot be their fruition. Concluding these considerations, we may sum up that the supreme principle is

neither physical existence nor the individual and finite self such as we are. It is infinite self-conscious spirit, of which the traditional terms such as the Absolute, God and Brahman are apt designations.

Lower orders of existence, matter and finite centre of consciousnes do not constitute the substantive being of the Supreme principle either individually or collectively. In so far as they are positive they are included in the totality of Divine life. They cannot be unreal for nothing positive in essence falls outside the all-affirming reality of God. Their diversity and the individuality of each factor constitutive of that diversity stand as model expressions of the abundance of the infinite, for diversity and individuality are not blank negatives in their final import. In the words of an old wirter the Supreme principle is such that its 'predicates are the worlds' (Quoted by Pringle-Pattison. Idea of God 174).

**Recapitulation :**

We have traversed a considerable distance in our argument. No Philosophy of history that ignores the principle of human freedom can have validity. History sustains freedom through the presentation of a dualism of values. Of the two conflicting patterns of value, one is naturalistic and the other represents a spiritual or Idealistic point of view. In order to make a decision between the two standpoints, a consideration of the metaphysical nature of the self, the subject that must adopt the values, was undertaken. We have gathered together the principal grounds for affirming that the subject is a spiritual principle transcending the physical system. That conception of the self determines the choice of values. The development of the fundamental character and capacity of the self is the Supreme good. The principal power and attribute of the self is the pursuit of truth. Hence the chief good lies in truth or apprehension of reality. The natue of Reality must be construed in the light of the nature of truth. Truth, in the final analysis, is an all-embracing affirmation with no limitation in the form of negation and comprehending all positive insights in an organized and systematic manner. Answering this nature of truth, Reality must be interpreted as an all-inclusive and unitary principle. The nature of Reality transcends that of matter and finite spirits. It is the supreme spirit containing within itself infinite diversity characterizing it as adjectival determination. This infinite totality embodying the ultimate spirit is the real in its fullest sense. The goal or purpose of human life is the apprehension of this all-containing Divinity. Such is the line of thought we have pursued so far. The two landmarks, or decisive turning points in the progress of the argument are the doctrine of the soul and the doctrine of God. Man's search for his real summum bonum starts with the discovery of the soul and culminates in the

achievement of the vision of God. Man is spirit and attains the fullness of his being in the realization of God.

In the historical progress of the human spirit self-discovery marks the first stage of attainment and founded on this and issuing from it is the second and final stage in which the absolute and infinite spirit is apprehended. The emergence of the second level of purpose and aspiration requires as its precondition and preparation the completion of the first process of man coming to the realization of his fundamental nature.

**Progress towards the Knowledge of God:**

The two stages of attainment together require the mobilization of all the resources of personality. Neither self-knowledge nor the apprehension of God is purely an affair of the mere intellect or reason. What the intellect grasps must be appropriated completely and transformed into a form of cognition at once more complete than either sense-perception or inference. The senses limit the range and richness of what could be cognized. Inference has no dubt a wider sweep and transcends the temporal, special and qualitative restrictions of sense-experience. But it has its own characteristic restriction. It springs out of antecedent knowledge by way of ground and laws of valid procedure and thus displays the fragmantariness of derivative knowledge. It is no self-contained source of truth. These familiar modes of knowledge suffer from inadequacy and there is need for completer apprehension. Even revelation championed by the great Religions cannot be considered self-sufficient. Revelation has to be properly interpreted and its claims are to be examined and sustained in relation to the rest of experience. This function of interpretation and reflective justification has to be performed by reason. Revelation that is protected from the operation of rational inquiry goes under in the long run. Thus every mode of experience and knowledge demands to be raised to adequacy. Therefore self-knowledge as well as the knowledge of God must be intensified, elnarged and enriched beyond what mere philosophical argument can provide. Knowledge of God raised to this level of adequacy is the Supreme Value. At this stage it becomes necessary to deal with the exact way of developing this knowledge. This usually goes under the name Sadhana in Indian thought. The philosophy of Sadhana is the philosophy of practice, the consideration of the plan of life capable of effectuating the desired realization of the supreme good. The Gita is the principal treatise in the Hindu tradition devoted to this theme.

The nature of the plan of Sadhana is determined by the precise nature of the hindrance to be overcome in the process of realization.

What makes the natural destiny of man a matter for active striving and systematic effort must be enquired into. The result of that investigation governs the formulation of the programme of practical endeavour. The simple and easy answer is that ignorance is the condition that has to be conquered through the process of knowledge. But ignorance is itself a phenomenon and does not obviate the necessity for explanation. If knowledge of reality is the fundamental power of the soul, privation of knowledge has to be accounted for. Some impediment preventing the actualization of the nature must be held the cause of ignorance. We have seen that the knowledge of the self and the knowledge of God as the supreme object would initiate the correct perspective concerning the supreme value and the right direction of effort. In the state of ignorance, a perverse conception of values and the consequent misdirection of effort do naturally ensue. Such a misapplication of the energies of the soul constitutes the essence of the Asuric mode of life. Every mode of life, every line of choice and exertion, has a tendency to perpetuate itself. Such a self-perpetuation of the system of values is required by the principle of self-determination which is the essence of moral freedom. The self shapes its destiny through its choice. As such, desire and effort entangling the individual in the downward path of life inevitably bring about the condition of ignorance as a concomitant necessity of their perpetuation. Pursuit of lower values is possible only when fortified by ignorance of the self and of God. Though Kama springs from Avidya, it in its turn produces Avidya. Just as eradication of ignorance is necessary for the eradication of desires, eradication of desires, is necessary for the emancipation from ignorance. This is the significance of the repeated assertion in the Gita that Kama envelops the soul and is the great foe of spiritual illumination. Conquest over desire must be accomplished for achieving the light of knowledge natural to spirit. So the essential task of human sadhana is to eradicate the desires that set up the state of ignorance. The hanker_ing after the things of the world must be countered, subdued and finally annihilated by the passionate love of the supreme Reality. The central principle is that only an intenser attachment can put down the undesirable attachment. The term that represents this transcendent yearning is Bhakti. When this counter-love liquidates desire, the inner hindrance to the soul's knowledge of God stands removed and the natural power of knowledge unfolds itself into supreme achievement. Sadhana is the evolution of Bhakti and as it soars higher and higher, there is the concomitant elimination of the rule of desire that is responsible for the privation of knowledge. Therefore, the theory of sadhana is the systematic consideration of the progress of Bhakti.

Two stages can be distinguished in the practical cultivation of Bhakti, in the evolution of the love of God. The first stage culminates

in the elimination of the desires that stand in the way of the intuitive and complete realization of the self. When that realization arises Bhakti gets immensely augmented and proceeds towards the destruction of the desires that obstruct the intuitive and direct vision of God.

The life of devotion prior to and conducive to the eventual perception of the reality of the self, naturally involves a re-orientation of the normal life of man. The motive force of that life is earthly desire, the pursuit of bodily and material interests and that has to be replaced by another motive force. Self-interest has to yield place to another interest. Bhakti or interest in God must furnish the motive and passion for the new life. The modes of activity may remain unchanged but the inner drive, the actuating force is different. As the self's essential nature as the centre of contemplation is yet to be apprehended, the element of contemplation in the new life does not yet dominate but the inner spirit and the governing purpose refers all the active life to the supreme spirit. This is Bhakti through action, devotion in the shape of action. This Bhaki through action can indeed be a passion, an overwhelming energy, because the God-ward life is in consonance with the inner constitution of the self and whatever releases into expression and actuality that constitution is an unfailing source of joy and self-expansion. The self is an aspect, a factor, woven into the ontological texture of the life of God and the mode of life that translates that metaphysical fact into the medium of active living is an enthralling experience of self-fulfilment and elevation. The character of God-centred action in the place of self-centred action must be precisely determined. In the routine worldly action the agent refers to himself as the principal agent, conceives of his action as belonging to him in a special way and puts forth the action in question for securing to himself material and sensate ends. The conception of the agent, action and the self for whose gratification it is entered into ascribes centrality of significance to the individual ego undertaking action. The ends aimed at are of the nature of the satisfaction of animal desire, desire originating from the identification of the self with the organism. When the action is transformed into a form of devotion there is a radical revolution in conception. The agent is thought of as belonging to God, as a tool in His sovereign hands. The action is looked upon as pertaining to and as forming part of God's action in the world. The ends that may be realized are surrendered to God in the spirit of worship. The nature of the ends sought also undergo fundamental change. Only such ends as are worthy of being offered in divine service, ends not instrumental to our animal gratification, but such as are in fulfilment of the Divine purpose embodied in creation will inspire and direct the activity in question. As such, the goal of action will lie in active conformity to Divine will and the whole plan of life would depend upon the interpretation of the nature of the Divine principle. Individual self-culti-

vation, social morality and religious duty will all come under this comprehensive scheme of God-centred life. The progressive development of such a life motivated in every way with loving dedication to God will gradually put down and extinguish, not indeed the zest for life or work, but the addiction to lower values.

With the disappearance of the solicitation and pressure of sensate desires the ignorance set up and sustained by them as a condition of their pursuit and gratification will cease. As a consequence there will arise the first stage of enlightenment unveiling the nature of the individual soul. The self becomes a matter of certainty in its essential nature through the illumination breaking forth from the completion of the yoga of action, the active life of service. This illumination is not final, for the devotion from which it has proceeded is not fullfledged and final. But it forms a vital stage in spiritual advance.

The illumination in question must be considered a little and the nature of the attainment it represents must be marked. What philosophical argument outlines as the nature of the soul becomes an experiential possession. Its transcendence of the body, its essential being as self-conscious spirit, non-temporal and integral and its central character as constituted of the power of knowledge become immediate data of inward cognition.

The self comes out of the prison of misidentification and it is intuited in its pure essence. With that discovery of the authentic self by itself, its fundamental attribute or activity of the nature of knowledge gets recognition. The self is known as the knower and from that knowledge arises the unimpeded liberation of its power of knowledge. The immediate understanding of the self as essentially characterised by the knowing capacity initiates, as it were, its career in full possession and exercise of its power of knowledge. The self is intuited as such and is established in the enjoyment of its basic nature as such. This level of growth may be fittingly described as Jnana-Yoga for it consists of the knowledge of the self as the subject of knowledge and the unhindered consolidation of it in the pursuit of knowledge.

It should not be forgotten that this self-revelation and the full exercise of the nature of self-hood is just a phase of the pathway of Bhakti even as the preceding process of God-centred activity was. Its specific place and function in the developing spirit of devotion must be determined. In it the natural urge and capacity of the spirit for knowledge is liberated in unimpeded expansiveness. What could furnish scope for the full engagement and active exercise of this spiritual energy is the task of comprehending reality. In that direction the self-knowing seeker pursues self-fulfilment. In the knowing of reality lies his supreme adventure of self-actualization and the consequent delight

of existence. The fullness of active self-hood is the inner principle of joy. But reality is one and all-comprehending, it is the Supreme Divine principle and hence the enlightened individual directs himself to the seeking of God with all the strength and dimensions of his soul, for therein lies his supreme self-fulfilment. As the Chandogya Upanishad has it the Bhuma, the infinite real, is joy. Similar is the logic of the Taittireeya identification of Brahman with Ananda. The contemplative power of the soul, which is its defining essence, comes to be identified as such and its development in and through the knowledge of God comes to be pursued as the highest and complete end of existence. This is Bhakti at the level of contemplation crowning the preparatory phase of Bhakti through action. The transition from the one to the other occurs through the emergence of self-knowledge. In karma-yoga the joy of devotion lies in the consciousness of being instrumental to God and in this higher level the joy of Bhakti consists in exercising the knowing power of the soul, which is its fundamental excellence, in seeking Him through contemplation. The joy of contemplation is added to the joy of service thereby. As the contemplative love of God proceeds it is intensified progressively by the increasing recognition of the inexhaustible riches of Divine perfection and glory. It is also to be believed that this intensification of love is further accomplished by the progressive self-revelation of God, for in proportion to the advance in love the obstacles in the form of desires to the vision of God recede, and with the removal of the only impediments in the situation the God-oriented nature of the soul and the self-revealing nature of God culminate in the revelation in question. The new dimension of revelation adds further intensity and magnitude to love. Revelation feeds love and love opens up the interior of the soul, as it were, for further revelation. When this development of love reaches the highest point of intensity and fullness, the inclination towards the lower values, which is the sole obstacle blocking the knowledge of God, is destroyed without a trace. With that total purification of mind, the apprehension of God arises naturally and spontaneously, establishes itself and fills the soul with the Supreme joy of realization. To be filled with reality, as Plato divined in the Republic, is to be really filled.

We have knowledge throughout the evolution of the spirit in the several stages of life and Sadhana. The distinctive nature of this culminating knowledge must be precisely noted. Empirical knowledge, the ordinary unphilosophical understanding of the world, is the starting point. According to our account of the nature of truth and error, its principal defect is its inadequacy, the negative element it contains by way of overlooking or denying the aspects of reality other than the fragment of it seized upon as the complete real. Its affirmative content is to be taken up and amplified and not cancelled in the correcting insight that has to replace it. When the real quest for value

and reality starts, the knowledge of the self and God has to be attempted by way of the philosophical thought. The philosophical understanding of the real self and the supreme reality is to be further developed into a completer form of apprehension. Hence the process of Sadhana, the culture and discipline of the soul for a fuller and more immediate realization of truth. In this planned process of development, the devotion by way of activity does involve a living awareness of God as the moving agent, the master and the final goal of all action. When this stage leads to self-discovery, to the yoga of self-knowledge, there is the gaining of the intuitive knowledge of the self as the spiritual subject of knowledge. This new self-intuition liberates the inherent power of knowledge to its natural expansiveness. The knowing power is now directed towards the knowing of God by way of contemplation. This contemplation is naturally joyous, for the self is giving therein unimpeded exercise to its inherent nature. In the progress of the contemplative love of God, there is knowledge by way of the appreciation of the perfection and glory of God and by way of God's self-revelation as the lower values loosen their hold on the aspirant progressively. Such revelation effects further purification from those values through a further intensification of love. When the contemplative love reaches its completion and all interests other than the vision of God perish without residues, the completest knowledge of God emerges into actuality. The sense of this completeness needs clarification. It is not that the supreme is exhaustively understood and sized up. Such a knowledge of the Infinite is impossible. It signifies that all the potentiality for knowledge possessed by the finite self is being utilized and put into operation in the knowledge of God. There is no experience which is not an experience of God and no understanding unrelated to the Supreme datum. There is completeness in the direction and operativeness of the subject and this itself gives birth to the overwhelming experience of the profound mystery and immensity of the Divine. This fullness of knowledge is also fullness of joy. There is also an element of dedication in this experience, the spirit of surrender of personality. The self is a factor, a mode in the total reality of God and the consciousness of this fact entering into the experience adds the element of self-dedication. The experience constitutes the highest value. The element of will in personality serves desires in the lower unregenerate life and is bent to the service of the moral law in the purely ethical level of life. In this level it spontaneously surrenders itself to the maintenance of the joyous apprehension of God. The self values its own being for being the vehicle of this experience and this attachment of only instrumental value to the self confers upon the experience the character of worship. Communion with God through active choice of will and the humbling of the self as of value only by virtue of and for the sake of the communion is the central import of adoration. Thus the experience is

apprehension, joy and adoration all in one. This total life in God is the ultimate beautitude.

The communion of the finite individual with the Absolute being of God through intuitive knowledge, the joy of such knowledge and the adoring self-surrender induced by the knowledge and joy is the ultimate goal of finite life according to the fundamental spirit of the Gita and the essential revelation of all the mystical religions. In the final analysis it is confirmed by all sound Idealism concerned with the problem of value. History must be looked upon as furnishing the field and the pathway of evolution for working out this destiny. The historical ascent of man starts from the philosophical concepts of the human soul and God and consists of the development of conciousness through the various levels of devotion, through moral activity, the emerging self-understanding and the final contemplative love of God.

This interpretation of the meaning and purpose of the historical progress of man is adumberated in an ancient Name of God in the Indian Tradition. The term 'Nara' stands for man, the human individual whose essential being is immortal and spiritual. He reaches his final beautitude in God. Hence the supreme being is rightly named 'Narayana'. Narayana dwells in us as the life of our life and He, it is, who sustains us in being, nourishes us in our growth and receives us into abundance of life.

His hallowed name bears within itself the last word in the philosophy of History.